

Scientists study children's TV habits

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A Scottish study has found disturbing data regarding TV viewing, including the fact a 6-year-old would rather look at a blank screen than human faces.

The University of Glasgow study, co-written by psychology researcher Markus Bindemann, found children ages 6 to 8 respond to the image of a television as alcoholics do to pictures of an alcoholic drink.

In a series of experiments conducted in primary schools, most youngsters looked at a picture of a blank television screen as soon as it flashed up on a computer next to a smiling face, The Times of London reported.

"Faces are important social stimuli and it is surprising that children prefer to look at television instead," said Bindemann.

"We learn social interaction -- how to deal with people and how to read them -- from looking at their faces," he told the newspaper. "If you just stare at a box you don't get any genuine interactions."

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